



NEWS RELEASE

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources
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FOR RELEASE: July 2, 2008

CONTACT: Rori Paloski, DNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources
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SUBJECT: Proposed Incidental Take Authorization for replacement of Lilac Lane and Freistadt Road bridges in Germantown, Washington County, Wisconsin.

Editor's Note: Wisconsin's endangered species law (s. 29.604, Wis. Stats.) requires the Department of Natural Resources to notify the public when it proposes to authorize the incidental taking of a State Endangered or Threatened species.

MADISON, Wis. The Department of Natural Resources proposes to authorize the incidental taking of the state threatened Butler's gartersnake (*Thamnophis butleri*) resulting from the Wisconsin Department of Transportation's (WDOT) Local Roads Program replacement of bridges at Lilac Lane and Freistadt Road over the Menomonee River in Germantown, Washington County. Incidental take refers to the unintentional loss of individual endangered or threatened animals or plants that does not put the overall population of the species at risk.

The Lilac Lane and Freistadt Road bridges are considered deficient and have been identified for replacement due to deteriorating conditions. The proposed action is to replace the existing structures and reconstruct the approaches. The existing twenty-seven foot wide roadway will only be widened to a maximum of twenty-eight feet. The existing structures will be removed and will be replaced with twin-cell concrete box culverts. Both bridge sites contain habitat suitable for the state-threatened Butler's gartersnake. The habitat on both sides of the Lilac Lane bridge has been identified to be a site of significant conservation value (Tier 3) for the snake. The Freistadt Road bridge has been determined to have Tier 3 habitat on the south side of the bridge and Tier 1 (site of minimal conservation value) habitat on the north side of the bridge.

Through the Incidental Take Consultation process, conservation and minimization measures were developed to ensure protection of the snake. Take is being minimized or avoided by disturbing only a small amount of suitable habitat, placement of snake exclusion fencing and mowing. Some habitat will be temporarily impacted during construction and then restored to suitable habitat at the conclusion of construction activities. The roadways will be widened only slightly so permanent loss of habitat will be minimal. The Department has determined that the proposed projects will minimize the impacts to the snake by adhering to conservation measures identified in the Jeopardy Assessment; are not likely to jeopardize the continued existence and recovery of the state population of the snake or the whole plant-animal community of which it are a part; and has benefit to the public health, safety or welfare that justifies the actions.

Copies of the background information on the Butler's gartersnake and the jeopardy assessment are available on the DNR website at <http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/er/take/notices.html> or upon request from Rori Paloski, Department of Natural Resources, Bureau of Endangered Resources, PO Box 7921, Madison, WI 53707, 608-264-6040. Public comments will be taken through July 23rd, 2008 and should be sent to Ms. Paloski at the above address.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT: Rori Paloski, DNR, Bureau of Endangered Resources, 608-264-6040 or P.O. Box 7921 Madison, WI 53707-7921
